

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. issued the following statement today in response to a press conference held by Will County Board Executive Joe Mikan.

Mikan said he will ask the Illinois Department of Transportation to co-sponsor with Will County the development of a proposed Third Airport near University Park in Will County.

Jackson said: "The state has made it quite clear that it does not want to own or operate the Third Airport. And, given the state's budget crisis, it's extremely unlikely the state will be able to find several hundred million dollars to finance the construction of a new airport," Jackson said.

"I have presented IDOT with a better plan. My plan finances airport construction through an innovative public-private partnership that poses no cost and no risk to the state or the taxpayers, and which presents the best opportunity of giving the state a return on its investment without causing further fiscal crisis," Jackson said.

Also, Jackson noted that Mikan's request is nothing new.

"This is Mr. Mikan's second request for the state to engage in deficit spending," Jackson said. The congressman released a copy of a letter from Mr. Mikan in which he made a similar request seeking IDOT's co-sponsorship of the airport back on May 19 – almost five months ago.